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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS  
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KPAQ KMDR ZI

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO AFRICA;  
HARARE

¶1. President George W. Bush's visit to Africa remains a core issue for discussion in op-ed and opinion pieces being carried in some of the leading newspapers in Zimbabwe. Excerpts follow:

¶2. Under headline "U. S. seeks to strengthen its position in Africa" the government controlled daily "The Herald" (07/18) carried the following op-ed by Chris Talbot:

"U. S. President Bush's African tour was something of a public relations debacle. . . His attempt to project a compassionate image was, to put mildly, less than convincing. . . If Bush hoped his visit would dispel the image of the U. S. as a warmongering bully, he was mistaken. . . Bush's Aids initiative is really about strengthening the U. S. position in Africa at the expense of imperialist rivals such as France and boosting the position of American-based corporations. . . The much-hyped Aids proposals are part of a bid to shoehorn U. S. corporations into Africa, oust foreign competitors and stamp out domestic enterprises. . . The U. S. initiative, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which was touted by Bush throughout his visit, is part of the same unilateralist corporate agenda. . . The U. S. drive into Africa is not only economic. It also involves establishing a much greater military presence under the guise of the war on terror. This will give the U. S. control over key resources such as oil and provide it with a more rapid global reach. . . ."

¶3. Under headline "Cowardly to expect Bush to liberate us" the independent daily "The Daily News" (07/18) carried the following opinion piece by Saul Gwakuba Ndhlovu, under his weekly column "A view from Matopos" published on page 10:

"United States President George W. Bush's visit last week. . . generated a great deal of interest and raised expectations among Zimbabweans about his country's role in solving Zimbabwe's socio-political problems. For quite a long time, many Zimbabweans have been praying and hoping that either the U. S. or Britain would intervene militarily in the country to remove the ZANU PF regime and replace it with a democratic government. . . (South African President Thabo) Mbeki has repeatedly publicly stated that South Africa would not intervene in Zimbabwean problems because they are an internal issue and thus, must be solved by Zimbabweans themselves. . . The cornerstone of the South African government's policy on Zimbabwe is simple: Zimbabweans must solve their own problems. . . But some Zimbabweans still continue to look for saviors from across their borders. . . ! It has never been clear to me why some of us would like either the South Africans or Americans or Britons to spend their money and time and risk their precious lives for the sake of our freedom and prosperity. . . The answer is simply that we are cowards! We have decided to turn our criticism and anger on Mbeki. . . It is important to face the truth, however bitter it is. We are our own enemies by being very poor administrators and craven cowards. . . All that Mbeki is telling us is to stand up and reclaim our freedom from those we believe to have usurped it. . . ."

SULLIVAN